REPORT OF

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TO

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

ON

CONSULTATION VISIT TO BAN CO CENTER, SAIGON, VIETNAM

NOVEMBER, 1970

This memorandum is designed to summarize my reporting to UUSC on my assignment as Consultant for the Ban Co Project in Saigon, South Vietnam. The terms of reference of the assignment were set forth in a letter dated 25th June, 1970 from UUSC - Boston as follows:

> An assessment of the program in Vietnam and recommendation of specific steps and actions required for the next six months and after the UUSC phases out.

The terms of reference were further expanded in a conference with Ralph and Ruth Tefferteller, Chief of Party and Senior Advisor respectively, during the International Conference on Social Welfare in Manila in September, 1970. The specific questions of primary interest for UUSC and the Teffertellers were subsequently set forth in correspondence from Saigon as follows:

1) What should be the Center's future connection with the Ministry's School of Social Work? How can Ban Co Staff - trained by American professionals - be given some accreditation as "field practice trainers" without having completed theory courses in the School of Social Work?

2) What is the experience of schools of social work with field placement under non-MSW personnel? Hasn't this prevailed in beginning stages of professional schools? May it not have to be the case in Vietnam?

3) After UUSC pulls out, how should the School view those whom UUSC has trained?

4) Should some kind of accreditation take place before?

5) In view of the existence of an Advisory Committee to the Ban Co Center, should UUSC help form a Board of Directors, a Management Committee or some other structure?

6) What responsibility should UUSC take in supporting study abroad in social work for those it has trained in the Ban Co Center? What kind of scholarship plan, if any, should be established? Should USA Schools of Social Work be considered in addition to Schools in Southeast Asia for education on the Master of Social Work degree level?

The Consultant began his relationship with the Ban Co Center by attending a staff luncheon on 2 November, 1970. He terminated his contacts with the Center personnel and those related to it on 11 November, 1970. It should be pointed out that the Consultant had spent a six week period in South Vietnam in 1967 as Chairman of the USAID Task Force to study social welfare needs in the country. The report of that Task Force, it was found, continues to serve as an important document in social welfare planning both within USAID, in the Ministry of Social

Welfare of the Government of South Vietnam, and by the UUSC staff in Vietnam.

The Consultant received and studied a number of documents prepared by the Center staff directly related to the Ban Co Center Project prior to his departure from the United States. These included:

a) Progress Report of UUSC's First Six Months in Vietnam (7/15/69)

b) Interim Report: Review of UUSC Project in Saigon (10/31/69)

c) Ban Co Residents Speak by Community Social Workers of the Ban Co Multi-Service Neighborhood Center (11/69)

d) Monthly Reports of the Project prepared for USAID - VN Contract #19 (September, 1969 - September, 1970)

e) Teaching Materials in Vietnamese Social Work - Translations of reports written in Vietnamese by the social workers-in-training at Ban Co Neighborhood Center (June, 1970)

In addition the following activities have been observed and conferences held in the Center:

a) Individual Conferences with the ten (10) students-in-training who are staff members of the Center;

b) Daily conferences with the Teffertellers and two evaluation conferences at the conclusion of the consultation period;

c) Frequent conferences with Miss Hoa, Vietnamese Director of the Center;

d) Conference with Leo Dorsey, American staff advisor;

e) Observant-Participant in a variety of the Center's program activities, indluding staff meetings, a meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Center;

f) Conferences with officials of the Government of Vietnam, USAID and CORDS, the U.S. Ambassador for CORDS in Vietnam, and representatives of foreign voluntary agencies.

g) Meetings with the staff of the National School of Social Work, the students of the School, and the Vietnamese Social Workers Association.

(A copy of the Consultant's Appointment Schedule is attached.)

The objectives of the UUSC project in Vietnam and the program in operation to carry out those objectives, and the characteristics of the Vietnamese national setting in which the program operates, will not be restated in great detail in this summary report. They are well known to UUSC headquarters and the staff in Saigon. Suffice it to point out, however, that the UUSC Ban Co Project is a direct service and experimental teaching program. The program seeks to

provide a spectrum of services for the residents in an urban community, particularly organizing self-help groups and referral to existing services. Through the provision of these services it seeks to train local personnel in the implementation and administration of the programs of the Center. The objectives of the Project have been stated as follows:

1. "Strengthen and extend opportunities for social work education in Vietnam."

2. "Operate a Community Center with programs relevant to the most acute needs, as determined by appropriate methods." (from questionnaire submitted by the Project staff to the Council of Voluntary Agencies 1/20/70).

Quite specifically, the Project seeks to provide social work training through "on-the-job professional training in the field of urban community center work." The Project staff hypothesized that beginning social work practice competence, in an economically and socially developing country, can be gained "through actual practice and application of knowledge under professional supervision in the field " (ibid). This training, in the Vietnamese setting, is designed to supplement the beginning program of social work training of the VN-Ministry of Social Welfare's School of Social Work in Saigon. The Ban Co Project was conceived, in addition to its own training function and its provision of a variety of services, as a field training station for students of the School of Social Work. It was designed, further, to highlight the importance of social planning and the provision of social services whenever a new neighborhood is in the making.

The Center is physically located in the Nguyen Thien Thuat Houses in Saigon Prefecture District III. The housing project consists of ten (10) four storied buildings built by the GVN for families whose homes were destroyed in the 1968 Tet offensive. There are 1400 flats in the Nguyen Thien Thuat houses and an additional number of families in the adjoining blocks served by the Center. The housing project was built on the site of one of the most savagely destroyed areas in Saigon during the 1968 Tet offensive. The decision to locate the Center in this setting was to provide an opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of placing a service Center in the midst of a newly emerging community.

Included in the services of the Center are the following:

1. Referral and Information Service

2. Casework and Personal Service

3. Pre-Natal Clinic and Family Planning Services

4. Well-Baby Clinic

5. Adult Education Program

6. Recreation Leadership Training

7. Youth Council and Self-Help Programs:
   English Classes for Youth
   Vocational Referral and Guidance
   Youth Committee for Social Action
   Youth Committee for Cultural Activities

8. Mothers Class for Women and Older Girls

9. Savings Bank and Cooperative for Youth and for Mothers

Great emphasis is placed on maximum citizen participation in defining the community's social needs and in sharing responsibility for implementing the programs necessary to fill the need.

A Citizens Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives and technical experts from the immediate community, has been established. The Committee meets monthly with a charge to help guide the program execution of the Center as well as the development of future programs. Its current membership includes the former Director of Cabinet of the Ministry of Health who is the Chairman; the Labor Advisor in USAID Labor Division; Deputy Chief of the Health Department, Saigon Prefecture; Director of the National School of Social Work; an attorney-at-law; the Phuong Chief of Phuong Cong Hoa; President and the Secretary of the Ban Co Women's Social Group; the President of the Ban Co Youth Council; the Chairman of the Administrative Council of Nguyen Thien Thuat Houses, and a Professor in the Faculty of Pedagogy.

In assessing the value and effectiveness of the Ban Co project, one must view it in the light of those factors that uniquely and adversely affect development of social welfare programs in Vietnam. Vietnam is ravaged by war. It has been in this state for twenty-five years. The social fabric of the country has all but been destroyed. As was pointed out by this Consultant in his letter of transmission of the 1967 report of the Social Welfare Task Force to USAID/VN/W, "we are awed and inspired that a people torn and suffering by the horrors of war, can at the same time begin to direct their energies and resources to social development." This statement certainly applies to the Vietnamese people who are deeply involved in the Ban Co Center. They and the American team members at the Center demonstrate by their activities their conviction that "social welfare has the potential for maximizing the human return on the investment and sacrifice being made through the war for freedom of choice and self-determination." The Ban Co Center appears to be a step toward realization of that potential for a social welfare program.

As a socially and economically developing nation, Vietnam has yet to develop the structures for meaningful social development of its people. Whatever social welfare programs exist, whether under governmental or voluntary agency aegis, the services are relief and crisis oriented. Few programs are designed to contribute to continuing and long-range needs for national social development. The Ban Co Center Program, as far as this Consultant has been able to determine, is one of the few that is not "war victims" or "refugee" or relief and crisis oriented.

Vietnam has only a token beginning of the various levels of trained social welfare personnel required to develop the social policies and programs required by the country at the national, regional, provincial, and "grass roots" levels. The Ban Co Center program must be viewed, then, as one effort to contribute to meeting this social welfare manpower need.

Lastly, the Ban Co Center program effectively satisfies what this Consultant considers to be the ultimate test in social welfare program assessment - accountability to the people the program seeks to serve. Based on this Consultant's experience with all those involved in the project, the Ban Co Center project is an extremely valuable and successful program. There is no question but that the programs in the Center meet expressed needs of the people it serves. Indeed, meaningful participation by a large number of the residents of the Nguyen Thien Thuat Houses has occurred in decisons regarding program selection and development. They have been involved in every step of program execution. The Advisory Committee composed of a cross section of residents of the area, meets monthly to respond critically and constructively to the program components of the Center. The document "Ban Co Residents Speak" attests to community participation in the fullest sense of that term. In these ways, the Ban Co Center program appears to meet one of the important criterion of accountability - participant involvement.

Located in the heart of the housing development, the Center and its programs are easily accessible to the people. Neither days of the week nor hours in the day seem to limit accessibility to the services of the Center by the people. Again, another criterion of accountability is satisfied - easy accessiblity to services.

Finally, in the context of accountability, one must examine the quality of the services rendered. An examination of the quality of services at the Ban Co Center must include consideration of the service provision and training aspect of the program. It also must take into consideration what are reasonable expectations in a developing country insofar as social welfare programs are concerned. The assessment of this Consultant is that the quality of most of the services in the Center adequately meet the needs of those using the services and substantially contribute to affecting positively their lives and enriching their life experiences.

This assessment of the program using the extent to which it responds to the criteria of accountability to those it served, was repeated in almost every interview the Consultant had with the Vietnamese staff members-in-training, with representatives of government, with the members of the Advisory Committee, and the social work colleagues of the American Team both in the voluntary agency sector and the faculty members of the National School of Social Work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before addressing myself to the specific questions posed by UUSC and its staff in Vietnam, an overall statement must be made by this Consultant with an accompanying recommendation.

This Consultant deplores the determining circumstances and resultant decision on the part of UUSC not to seek extension of the USAID support contract for a third year. While this Consultant understands and identifies with the position of those Americans who insist on military disengagement in Indo-China, he must insist, at the same time, that a distinction be made insofar as American responsibility is concerned in the areas of social rehabilitation and medical care. It is immoral for the wealthiest nation in the world, insofar as material goods are concerned, to refuse to give generously of its material resources to developing countries around the world. It is irresponsible as well as immoral to terminate valuable, effective social assistance in the midst of a social welfare program that is meeting at the local neighborhood level some basic needs of people. Indeed, many of the needs being met by the Ban Co Center Project and programs like it are realistic and practical routes for preparing people responsibly to carry out their right to be self-determining. In the light of the above observation, this Consultant recommends:

a) That UUSC provide transition support of the Ban Co project for at least a two year period beginning 2/28/71, while it examines the possibility of transferring responsibility for continuation of the Center in any one or combinations of the following ways:

   1) The Ban Co Center be transferred to the National School of Social Work and be administered by the School as an application, demonstration, and research center of the School.

   2) The Ban Co Center become a private social welfare agency under the direction of a Board of Directors (of which the present Advisory Committee would serve as the nucleus) with subsidy of public funds earmarked by USAID for allocation through the Ministry of Social Welfare.

   3) The Ban Co Center be transferred to the Ministry of Social Welfare and be integrated into its National Community Center program.

   4) That an appropriate, existing voluntary agency accept responsibility for the program presently carried by UUSC, with or without USAID Contract, with the ultimate objective accepted as 2) above.

As indicated earlier in this memorandum, the Project seeks to provide a basic level of social work training through on-the-job experience in the field of urban community center work. The entire training concept of the Project rests on the hypothesis that in this economically and socially developing country, beginning social work practice competence can be gained "through the actual practice and application of knowledge under professional supervision in the field."

Prior to the initiation of the Project, Vietnam had only the rudimentary resources for education in social work. The Caritas School offered a three year program designed to train beginning social workers in Vietnam. This is a three year program for students who have completed secondary school education. The program is heavily oriented to preparing auxiliary workers for medical settings and child care workers with a heavy health care orientation. Indeed the first year practice component of the School's training is basically a nursing assignment in a hospital. The second and third year field placements utilize the existing child caring agencies in the metropolitan area. It is most rare, however, that students in any of these placements can be supervised by a professionally trained social worker. The School graduates between 12 and 15 a year.

In the early part of 1967, planning for the establishment of the National School of Social Work was initiated under the direction of a United Nations team of professionally trained social workers. At this writing, the educational objectives of the School have not been clearly enunciated and a one year training program for field supervisors and school instructors for 14 students has been completed. A second one year training program for 35 students with the same objective is underway. None of the students in either of these courses had had any previous formal social work training except those from the Caritas School and one from the Buddhist School for Youth in Social Service. As far as this Consultant has been able to determine, there is one Vietnamese in the country who holds an M.S.W. degree or its equivalent.

The only other training effort in social work was a program carried out under the aegis of UNICEF for child care workers. That program has been completed.

It is against this background of a serious deficit in the preparation of personnel to provide a variety of services to people desperately in need of them that the training program in the Ban Co Project was conceived and must be assessed. As this Consultant understands it, UUSC has a tradition of interest and support for training in the social welfare field in developing countries. The assignment of three professionally trained, experienced social workers to the Ban Co Project, and the learning potential in a multi-service neighborhood center with rich, in-depth program content planned, supported the thesis that an additional social work training resource should be offered in a country that has so little.

This Consultant has commented positively on the direct service components of the Project. It is these direct service programs that have been used as the settings for training under the immediate supervision of the professionally trained American team.

A review of the personnel folders of the ten staff members-in-training indicates that with one exception these people had completed secondary school education

and a good majority of them either had completed their work in the Faculty of Letters or Law at the University of Saigon or at the Van Hanh University, or were awaiting completion of their final examinations. Interviews with each of them indicated quite clearly that the staff members-in-training are well motivated for helping and interested in learning and self-improvement. A reading of case material prepared by the in-training-staff members and used in individual conferences with the members of the team, does not fully reflect the sensitivity of feeling and of process that was demonstrated by the staff member in the helping situation. They are lost in translation from Vietnamese to English. These indications did come out, however, in the interviews the Consultant had with each person, and in observations by him of groups at work under their leadership.

The supervision of the staff members by the team, in many ways, follows the role taken by the field instructor in many schools of social work in the U.S.A. The field assignments (really the Center's program components) are clearly defined and the goals and objectives for learning are set forth in writing for each person.

It is unfortunate that it was not possible to build in, at the outset of the program, an evaluation procedure however simple it would need to have been. At least one would have had available at the end of two years some objective data to indicate the contribution of the training experience to attitudinal development of the trainees, to their knowledge base, and the extent to which they had identified and incorporated effective ways for working constructively and effectively with people. In the absence of such an evaluation procedure, the assessment of this Consultant can only be impressionistic.

If one relies solely on the level of understanding of the total situation involving individual and group problems of people as communicated by the trainees, and the degree of self-awareness as to their role in helping, one gains an important indicator of the effectiveness of the training program. The level of understanding, the awareness of the use of self, and the concern for and uses of the responses of the individual or group with whom the trainee is working are not at all likely to have come from any source but the learning experiences provided in the Center. If one, further, assesses accurately the enthusiasm and expressions of satisfaction of the people who use the Center, one can only conclude that, the staff-in-training are learning, if only at a beginning level, to offer services to people in this setting, in a constructive way. And in this Consultant's judgment, that is what helping is all about.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It would be highly desirable <u>if the present training component is to continue as an integral part of the Project program</u> that it do the following:

   a) Clearly define the level of practice the on-the-job training is designed to provide and any limitations that may exist as to settings;

) Identify the basic concepts and the core of knowledge presumed to be required in order to achieve a) above;

c) Outline the expectations of learning on the part of trainees at various stages of the experience and develop a simple evaluation tool to test achievement and development.

2. Whatever may be the structural arrangement agreed upon for the future of the Center, its unique resources for training should be fully utilized by the National School of Social Work.

3. The Project staff should stimulate and cooperate with others in the calling of a conference on education and training for social work in Vietnam. This might well be a one or two day conference held in Saigon and participated in by the National School of Social Work, which should properly carry the leadership role, the Caritas School of Social Work, Community Development Foundation, the Ban Co Project, and any other training resource with representatives of the governmental and voluntary agencies who are to be the consumers of the products of these training resources. The focus might well be on finding answers to such questions as training for what? at what level? by whom? with what combination of resources?

4. It is recommended that UUSC raise and make available funds to Vietnamese for study abroad in social welfare. In part, a scholarship program providing trained leadership in social welfare will contribute to the protection of the investment already made by UUSC to the development of social welfare in Vietnam. Without a cadre of professionally trained social welfare personnel, neither the Ban Co Project or similar social welfare demonstrations can be assured of continuation at an acceptable level of service provision. But further, scholarship support through UUSC will make available to Vietnam professionally trained leadership in social welfare that can function quite independently of the politics of government. It would be hoped that the recipients of such scholarship award would return to Vietnam with assurance at least initially, of employment in the Ban Co program and any other similar programs under voluntary auspices.

While priority should be given in the granting of scholarship awards to schools of social work in the Far East region of the world, on a highly selective basis both as to school and scholarship recipient, schools outside the Far East region should be used. In the latter instance, it would be desirable to relate the student to an advisor who is informed about the social needs of Vietnam, the stage of its social development, and the use that is likely to be made of social workers whose professional training is secured abroad.

Dr. James R. Dumpson
APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

Monday, November 2

1:00 P.M.	Ban Co Staff Luncheon 5 Cao Thang #61 (Tefferteller)

Tuesday, November 3

8:30 A.M.	Ban Co Center, 249 Nguyen Thien Thuat
9:00 A.M.	Council of Voluntary Agencies at Vol Villa 207 Cong Hoa
11:30 A.M.	Conference - UUSC Office with RBT, RST, Leo Dorsey (Mondial Building)
3:00 P.M.	Individual Conference: Miss Hien, UUSC Office (Mondial Building)
7:00 P.M.	Cocktail Party w/Guests to meet Dr. Dumpson 5 Cao Thang - Apt. # 61

Wednesday, November 4

8:30 A.M.	Individual Conference: Miss Thu Thuy
10:30 A.M.	Individual Conference: Mrs. Nhut
3:00 P.M.	Staff Meeting - Ban Co Center (at the Center)
7:30 P.M.	Asia Foundation - Staff Dinner Meeting at Raymond Johnson's Home, 23 Bis Tu Xuong

Thursday, November 5

8:30 A.M.	Individual Conference: Miss Hoa (Mondial Bldg.)
10:00 A.M.	Norman Firnstahl, CORDS/War Victims Directorate USAID II
3:00 P.M.	Robert Davis and Jason Brown CORDS/War Victims/Social Welfare - USAID II
5:00 P.M.	Mr. Bien - UUSC Office
7:30 P.M.	Dinner w/Dr. Niem and David Rybak, VOLAG Liaison Office at 5 Cao Thang

Friday, November 6

8:00 A.M.	Individual Conference: Mr. Su (Mondial Bldg.)
10:00 A.M.	UN Team - Staff Meeting, School of Social Work
2:30 P.M.	Individual Conference: Mr. Van (Mondial Bldg.)
4:30 P.M.	Individual Conference: Miss Nen (Mondial Bldg.)
7:30 P.M.	Dinner with Dr. and Mrs. Stahel

Saturday, November 7

9:00 A.M.	Students - School of Social Work Petrus Ky Refugee Camp
10:30 A.M.	UN Team - School of Social Work
Afternoon	Draft Report Writing
5:30 P.M.	Advisory Committee - Ban Co Center

Sunday, November 8

10:00 A.M.	Vietnamese Social Workers' Association Caritas - 38 Tu Xuong
4:30 P.M.	Ban Co Center - Mrs. Nhut's women open their bank
5:30 P.M.	International Voluntary Services - Hugh Manke

Monday, November 9

8:30 A.M.	Individual Conference: Miss Hang
9:45 A.M.	USAID II-Jason Brown, Pre-Conference re meeting with Colby
10:30 A.M.	Ambassador Colby, William E., CORDS
12:30 P.M.	Lunch - Father Charlebois, 25 Hong Thap Tu
3:00 P.M.	Dr. Lam Van Thach - National Rehabilitation Institute
4:30 P.M.	Mr. Andre Louis - UNICEF

Tuesday, November 10

11:00 A.M.	Teffertellers and Leo Dorsey

12:00 Noon	Leo Dorsey - Lunch
3:00 P.M.	Miss Thanh Thuy
3:30 P.M.	Miss Phan Ngoc Quoi
4:15 P.M.	Sister Francoise, Caritas
7:00 P.M.	Dr. Stahel's Home - Reception

Wednesday, November 11

11:00 A.M.	Final Conference with Teffertellers and Dorsey
12:15 P.M.	See Miss Hoa briefly at Mondial Building
2:15 P.M.	Wind up Conference with Albert Stahel and Mrs. Tu
3:30 P.M.	Franklin R. Stewart, Chief, War Victims Directorate
6:00 P.M.	Due at Airport